

A FIRE IN Okinawa

Story and Photos by SGT Brett McMillan

SOLDIERS who deployed to Okinawa from the Army Reserve's 347th Quartermaster Company in Pennsylvania enhanced their MOS and soldier skills during exercise Habu Sakusen by practicing fire-fighting techniques, assisting in petroleum distribution and helping their host unit perform vital maintenance tasks.

The soldiers, from Farrell and St. Mary's, Pa., were participating in the annual exercise hosted by the Okinawa-based 505th QM Battalion.

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For many, the adrenaline rush that came from practicing firefighting techniques with the Crash Fire Rescue marines at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma was the highlight of their training on island.

"It was high speed and very intense," SPC Rich Daniels said of the training. "It was also important for us because we never know when it's going to happen and when we're going to have to fight a fire."

Training with the 505th also provided the opportunity for fuel-handling experience the soldiers can't get anywhere else. The 505th's pipeline is "the only fixed, active pipeline in the Army," according to SFC John Reed, the 505th QM Bn. training NCO.

"Petroleum is really the lifeline of this island. If the 505th was to get deployed elsewhere, we could have to come in and do its job," Daniels explained.

Motor Sergeant SFC Gerald Day, also from the 347th QM Co., said his soldiers worked with special forces and 505th motor pool personnel to perform scheduled maintenance on equipment ranging from Humvees to generators and boat motors.

"Our work served two purposes," he said. "We got the training we need and we helped the 505th get essential maintenance tasks accomplished." □



Soldiers from the 347th Quartermaster Company create a series of collecting pools to stop a "spill," then use cloth filters to remove soap suds representing contaminants in the water.

Soldiers from the 347th Quartermaster Company attack a fire that has erupted after an "airplane crash" during training at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma on Okinawa.

